

OPENING SPEECH

12TH ORDINARY SESSSION OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Bamenda, 16 October 2023

- ✓ The Representative of State, Governor of the North-West Region,
- ✓ Honorable Senators
- ✓ Honorable Members of the National Assembly,
- ✓ Esteemed Professor, Vice Chancellor University of Bamenda,
- ✓ The Public Independent Conciliator,
- ✓ Their lordships President of the North-West Court of Appeal, Attorney General and President of the administrative Court,
- ✓ The Generals and valiant military and security forces,
- ✓ Honorable members of the Regional Executive Council,
- ✓ Honorable Royal Highnesses, Members of the North-West Regional Assembly House of Chiefs,
- ✓ Honorable Members of the North-West Assembly House of Divisional Representatives,
- ✓ The Senior Divisional Officer MEZAM,
- ✓ Director Generals and General managers,
- ✓ Regional Delegates and Heads of regional bodies,
- ✓ The President, North-West section, Union of Cameroon Cities and Councils
- ✓ The Bamenda City Mayor,
- ✓ Distinguished Mayors of the North-West Region,
- ✓ Consultants to the Assembly,
- ✓ Representatives of Civil Society Organizations,
- ✓ Members of the press and Communication organs,

- ✓ All protocol duly observed
- ✓ Distinguished Guests
- ✓ Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

You are welcome to the September 2023 session of the North-West Regional Assembly, today October 16, 2023. We are grateful to God Almighty, for granting us traveling mercies and making it possible for us all to be here.

Today, we officially open the 12th session of the North-West Regional Assembly; an occasion that provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the progress we are making as a Region, towards our development aspirations. Our 30 months and counting in office, confirms that development and rebranding the Region is not a straight forward nor rosy journey, but our commitment and determination to ensure all we have envisioned is achieved, keeps us going regardless of any bumps on the way. We also thank our populations for the resilience and support they are rendering to us in the execution of our mandate.

For over 30 months now, we have committed to re-branding and setting the Region on a course towards peace, development and total return to normalcy. Despite the rough journey, the region is now on the steady path to attaining objectives and aspirations as derived from *Law N0. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019, instituting the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities*.

Honorable ladies and Gentlemen,

This September session is dedicated to updates on back-to-school 2023, PDI and NWRA PIB projects, NOWEDIF and the Customs clearing house project, and training from the Supreme State Audit (CONSUPE) on Public Finance Management. Our focus today, is on the achievements made so far and perspectives in ensuring a better and brighter future for our communities. In this regard the theme for this session is **“BUILDING CLEAN, SECURE, SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES”**.

Our theme calls upon every North-Westerner and the entire region to unite and build upon our individual and collective efforts, forging a more productive and unified North-West Region that future generations will be proud of.

Honorable Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since we separated last July, our Assembly, as you are certainly aware has been active in various spheres:

Out of the Region;

- ❖ The Assembly represented by CED, participated in the FEICOM major debates on the 12 of July 2023. As a result, the Special Council Support Fund is soliciting mature projects in the leisure and tourism sector.
- ❖ Your humble servant took part in the FEICOM financial assistance committee for Regions (CCFF-R) on the July 20, 2023 and as fall out, the Region secured one billion CFA francs in 2023 for the Regional Headquarter project.
- ❖ The P/REC and CHSD attended the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Regional meeting in Yaoundé on July 24, 2023 where the CHSD presented on social inclusion, the experience of the North-West Region.
- ❖ Consultation meeting on the “NDICs Global Europe 2021-2027” pilot program,(dealing with geopolitical strategies and alliances) as well as the launching ceremony of PNDP book on the community driven participatory experience in Cameroon on August 4th, 2023 in Yaoundé.
- ❖ The Assembly also had the opportunity to take part in the evaluation of National Dialogue 4 years after on August 11, 2023, in Buea where government (MINDDEVEL) asked for a write up on the PDI experience in the region.
- ❖ On September 15, 2023, your humble servant represented the Assembly in a meeting at the Ministry of External Relations on Italian cooperation; twinning of Cameroon and Italian regions.
- ❖ XXXVth Extra Ordinary session of FEICOM board of Directors in Yaoundé on September 29, 2023 and a meeting with MINEE on September 29, 2023.
- ❖ CED represented P/REC in Garoua on October 02nd 2023 during the UN habitat day and Nkambe won the 6th cleanest city competition worth 30 million CFA project.

In the Region, the following key activities animated the season;

- The Region welcomed the Ministers of Public Works and MINPMESSA to Bamenda on the 4th of July 2023
- The Secretary General of the Assembly represented the P/REC in the planning meeting with the PPRD/ UNDP North-West for projects on the 24th of July.
- Regional coordination meeting for the maintenance of peace and order and the handing over of prizes by NWRA to winners of cleanest municipal council contest on the 24th of August 2023. P/REC presented results and a SWOT analysis of the PDI in the region.
- CAEPA project launch with stakeholders on the 30th of August 2023. The Region also participated in the sectorial conference of the Ministry of Secondary Education on August 23, 2023.
- Representing P/REC, CED took part in a meeting at the Governor's office followed by visit to the regional gas plant at BANGSHIE on August 24th ,2023.
- Preparatory meeting of Cameroon cup finals represented by the Hon. Questor at the Governor's office on the 14th of September 2023.
- And on the 22nd of September, the North-West Regional Assembly awarded scholarships to 100 outstanding students in the 2023 certificate examinations, 2,000 bags, and 20,000 exercise books to needy students in all the seven divisions of the Region, and didactic materials to 30 literacy centers in the Region during the back-to-school ceremony at the court yard of Regional Delegation of Secondary Education.

Cooperations and Partnerships

Our Assembly has continued to chart new courses and pave ways for cooperation and partnership, which will foster the development of the Region. On behalf of the Assembly, we have signed a MoU with the North-West Regional branch of United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) to foster joint planning, programming, monitoring of projects and information sharing.

The Assembly has entered another partnership agreement with COMINSUD a community-based humanitarian organization to collaborate, network and provide technical expertise for development issues in the Region. Further, the Assembly is working on a partnership with MAGZI for the leasing of 2 hectares of land for the Customs clearing house and another partnership agreement with the University of

Bamenda to bolster training, research and scientific solutions for socio-economic development of the Region.

The Roving Ambassador of the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD), the 6th African region, visited the Regional Assembly on October 7, 2023 to explore the possibility of funding medical and smart eco cities, in the NWR.

Concerning in-house training, the Assembly in partnership with SMILE TRAIN, trained 82 Community health workers on cleft care on the 28th and 29th of September 2023 and CONSUPE trained the REC as well as staff on Administration and Public Finance Management on Saturday, October 7, 2023.

Project Updates

Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2023, the North-West Regional Assembly has awarded through the Regional Assembly Internal Tenders Board 40 Contracts/jobbing orders.

As of today, all the 40 contracts/jobbing orders have been signed and 36 service orders notified. Among the ongoing projects, we have rehabilitation/construction of secondary schools, workshops and laboratories (08), rehabilitation of vocational training institutions – SAR SMs (06), rehabilitation of some palaces (11), construction, rehabilitation and extension of mortuaries (02), maintenance of Regional Roads (03), and the Region wide project of the construction of the North-West Regional Assembly Administrative Building as well as the guest House (lodge). These projects are listed in the 5th edition of the North-Westerner which is available in the secretariat and on the web site.

Tomorrow Tuesday, 17/10/2023, the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development will be laying the foundation stone of the Regional headquarter and Regional lodge projects in the company of the Representative of State, P/REC and the General Manager of FEICOM.

As of date, we have a physical level of execution of 71% for all projects, which should improve significantly in the days ahead. The project for the construction of an

emergency centre in Bamenda has just been awarded and execution will start as soon as the contractor is notified.

Before I end, let me address the burning imperative of peace, a pre-requisite for meaningful development. We still sadly record resistance to project execution in some areas of the Region. Major regional and national road projects have been awarded to contractors who are almost all from the region. We call on communities in the path of these roads to rekindle village road committees to support these contractors in the execution of these projects which have social amenities and utilities for these communities. The ball is in our court. Let us drive the development so sorely sought after. This is the moment to be counted and to count on one and sundry, to overcome division and harness our community spirit as one another's keepers. This is a turning point for all north-westerners to introspect and remind ourselves of our founding nay existential values of peace, unity, justice, hard work and solidarity as captured in our regional proverbial Slogan "U Na Mi, Mi Na U, Wi bi Wi", to work together for the peace, harmony and growth of our beloved Region. PAX DOMINI!

I will love to commend and appreciate the efforts of the Peace and Development Committees in the execution of PDI activities. The PDI has been embraced by the communities and the impact of the community decentralized activities is evident in the Divisions and Sub Divisions. The Divisional Coordinators will present updates in their respective committees on how this programme is bonding our communities and contributing to strengthening livelihoods and our local economy.

I want also to thank all of you who have come notwithstanding the challenges of the day. With such commitment, we are certain the North-West shall not only overcome but shall prevail. And the sooner the better!

I now have the pleasure to declare the 12th session of the North-West Regional Assembly officially opened.

Long live the commitment of development stakeholders of the region,

Long live the people of North West as they unite to work for peace and development,

Long live Cameroon and its illustrious Head of State, President Paul BIYA,

Thank you for your keen and kind attention.